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Growth, Open Space and Wilderness Colorado Opinion Research Shows Support for Wilderness Declines as Public Learns More About Restrictions

By

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Summary. An opinion survey of Colorado voters, conducted by Strategies West for Center for the New West, shows that public support for designation of additional wilderness areas is not unconditional and very much depends on the specific circumstances. Wilderness proposals that are the product of broad public input and that seek to balance preservation with multiple use of natural resources would seem to enjoy the strongest support. It is clear that using polling data that shows *general* support for wilderness areas to “demonstrate” support for any *specific* proposal is highly misleading and must not go unchallenged.

Background. The federal government owns 47% of the land in the 11 “public lands states” – all located in the Western U.S.* In four states, the federal government owns more than half the land – Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Utah. In Colorado, more than one-third of the land is owned by the Federal government.

Most of these federal land holdings in the West are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Manage-

ment (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service, making the BLM and the Forest Service the *de facto* planning and zoning board for much of the rural West. Result: Issues that anywhere else in the nation would be state or local issues – like locating a road or bike path or building a water system or camping facilities – are federal issues in the West. Examples: BLM or Forest Service managers decide how many cows will graze, where they will

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* The 11 public lands states, located in the lower 48, are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

graze and at what time of year – or where a pipeline or road must go.

Over the past decade Center-sponsored studies and forums, Congressional hearings and media reports have documented increasing dissatisfaction with “one-size fits-all” federal policies that guide the management of federal lands and the highly-intrusive administrative practices of federal land managers. A major concern is that land use decisions by federal authorities can have a strong bearing on jobs and economic opportunity in the small towns and rural areas adjacent to federal lands. Increasingly, Westerners and, to be fair, some federal land managers, have called for major reforms in federal land management policies – and especially for policies and practices that would allow greater decentralization of decision-making within the federal system and more local participation and administrative flexibility in this system of federal control.

The bottom line: Both Westerners and many outside the West are dissatisfied with the way the fed-

eral government manages its land holdings in the West – including national parks, wilderness and other federal lands – and the concern is highest among those most affected. These include tourists and other visitors to the West, farmers, ranchers and small business people who live and work in the rural West, and economic development professionals who struggle to make things work in the transition to America’s New Economy.

In addition, there is growing concern in Congress about how President Clinton uses executive power – and especially the willingness of this executive branch to usurp the Constitutional authority of Congress (violating the separation of powers among co-equal branches of government) and the states (violating the principles of federalism). This concern came to a head in October when Western members of Congress initiated a resolution to block the Clinton administration from designating 570,000 acres near the Grand Canyon as a national monument and to

restrict the administration’s ability to lock up other land holdings without subjecting its proposals to legislative review.

These are initial moves of an increasingly assertive Western Congressional delegation determined to restrict the power of the president to withdraw millions of acres of public land from multiple use without public participation or comment by bikers, climbers, builders of camp sites and explorers for oil and gas and other natural resources. These are among the most affected individuals and groups whose access to the land is often restricted or prohibited.

These concerns, and the timing of these moves by Western members of Congress, reflect a backlash from President Clinton’s 1996 election year designation of 1.7 million acres in Utah as the Escalante/Grand Staircase National Monument, a stealth decision without Congressional review and without broad consultation with state and local elected leaders or the public.

About the Authors



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***Public West, Private East.** Though national parks and forests dot the eastern two-thirds of the country, 88% of the nation's federal public lands outside Alaska lie in the 11 Western states. Some counties in these states consist of 80-90% federal lands, leaving little room for private development, but providing millions of acres of open space, natural resources, recreation, and wildlife habitat.*

Source: *Atlas of the New West*, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1997).

By contrast, when the process of restricting public use of the land includes broad intergovernmental consultation and public participation, good things happen. Example: October's designation of the Black Canyon National Park in Western Colorado. This designation of America's newest national park was supported by Sen. **Ben Nighthorse Campbell**, Rep. **Scott McInnis** and other members of Colorado's Congressional delegation and by most state and local elected leaders and the public in Colorado.

That's why proposals by Colorado Rep. **Diana DeGette** to designate additional wilderness areas in Colorado came as a surprise, especially her failure to involve

key elected leaders in the process and her claim, and those of her supporters, that her proposal for the designation of more wilderness in Colorado enjoys broad public support among a large majority of Coloradans.

The DeGette proposal.

Earlier this year, in February, 1999, Colorado Rep. Diana DeGette introduced the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1999 (H.B. 829). According to DeGette, "This legislation designates 1.4 million acres throughout Colorado as wilderness. This ensures the land would be left in its natural condition for future generations to enjoy."

This announcement was a surprise on two counts. First, it advocated wilderness designation for vast tracts of land in Western Colorado – hundreds of miles from her urban district. Second, Rep. DeGette and her supporters said that a majority of the public supported this designation, citing a public opinion survey, conducted the previous year by **Talmey-Drake Research & Strategy**, a respected opinion research organization in Boulder, Colorado.

The Talmey-Drake poll, they said, showed that more than 3-out-of-4 Coloradans (78%) supported her proposal to designate 1.4 million acres as additional wilderness. If true, this

finding would suggest a level of public attention that could only be described as unprecedented and extraordinary, as well as a major shift in public opinion.

In addition, a news release from the **Colorado Wilderness Network** directly linked the poll results with the DeGette bill, which would implement something called the “Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal” – designating 1.4 million acres of federal land in Western Colorado as wilderness. According to the release, *“A poll of Colorado registered voters conducted by Talmey-Drake in 1997 found overwhelming support for the Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal, with 80% of respondents supporting wilderness protection.”*

The news release went on to link additional wilderness designations to public concern about growth by quoting a Wilderness Society official, *“With sprawl and growth threatening to destroy our way of life, it has never been more important to save the last of Colorado’s unprotected wild places.”*

Attempts by the Center for the New West to obtain a copy of the survey were unsuccessful. Center staff wanted to see the specific questions and their placement in the questionnaire in order to assess the wording and other possible distortions caused by the structure of the questionnaire – what the experts call “instrument bias” effects. However, staff in Rep. DeGette’s office, who used the poll results to promote her wilderness bill, said they did not have a copy of the survey. Talmey-Drake Research also declined to provide a copy of the questionnaire.

The Center Poll. Accordingly, the Center for the New West decided to conduct a similar survey to determine: (1) whether Colorado voters have focused attention on the DeGette proposal; (2) whether public attitudes have, in fact, shifted in favor of locking up more federal land to be managed as wilderness; and (3) whether, as claimed, wilderness expansion is seen by the public as a way of addressing problems of growth and growth management in Colorado.

Summary of Findings. Five key findings emerged from the Center’s survey of registered Colorado voters.

1. While Coloradans are concerned about the impacts of growth, expanding wilderness areas is *not* viewed as the most effective way to address the problem.

Major U.S. Land Holdings

Numbers are reported in millions (m) of acres

Although most public land is located in the Western U.S., the federal government owns more than 31% of all land in the United States.

State owned	196.9 m
Federal owned	704.4 m
BLM	268.5 m
Forest Service	231.5 m
Other Federal*	129.2 m
Park Service	75.2 m
Tribal Lands	44.6 m

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM is responsible for a land mass larger than California and Oregon combined, mostly drier rangelands used for grazing, mineral and energy exploration, and recreation.

U.S. Forest Service

The Forest Service manages an area of the West larger than the size of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York combined. Their responsibilities range from protecting wilderness to regulating development, such as ski areas and regulating oil and gas exploration.

* “Other Federal” includes U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Energy and others.

Source for data: National Wilderness Institute, <http://www.nwi.org/Maps/LandChart.html>. Note: tribal lands are not included in the U.S. total. November 1999.

Source for agency descriptions: Atlas of the New West, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1997).

2. Colorado voters support wilderness areas – but not blindly so. Center survey results indicate that general support for wilderness areas cannot be construed as support for any particular wilderness proposal.
3. While the 1997 Talmey-Drake survey is consistently used to demonstrate public support for Rep. DeGette’s legislation, polling by the Center for the New West found that 61% of Colorado voters had not even heard about her proposal.
4. When given general information about the DeGette wilderness proposal, more voters support the plan to expand Western slope wilderness holdings (48%) than oppose it (38%). However, as Coloradans are provided more information about the DeGette proposal, the weight of opinion is reversed with 49% of the respondents opposing the DeGette proposal and only 39% supporting it.
5. In terms of growth management priorities, Colorado voters overwhelmingly (68% - 22%) support an expansion of parks and open space in their communities, rather than DeGette’s proposal to expand wilderness holdings in Western Colorado.

Methodology

The analysis reported here is based on responses to a telephone survey of 511 Colorado voters randomly selected from a list of registered voters.

The research was designed and developed by the Center for the New West in cooperation with Strategies West, a Colorado-based public opinion research organization, which also conducted the field work.

The interviews were conducted on July 8-10, 1999. Each interview required approximately twelve minutes.

The margin of error for the survey is 4.5% at the 95% confidence level.

Questionnaire

**available at
www.newwest.org**

The questionnaire was designed by the Center for the New West and Strategies West, the Colorado-based public opinion research organization. The actual questionnaire and the marginals (i.e., response distributions) are available on the Center’s web site, located at www.newwest.org.

The following provides a more in-depth view of the results from key questions:

Coloradans clearly believe there has been too much growth.

It is unmistakable that a majority of Coloradans are concerned about growth. In response to a question about what was “worst” about living in Colorado, a majority of respondents mentioned some negative aspect of growth.

In addition, when asked to choose between two views – that there has been too much growth in Colorado and development should be limited ... or that Colorado’s growth should be maintained – a majority of respondents believe

Opinions about Growth (Q.4)

Too much growth in Colorado ... or,
need to maintain growth?

Too much growth	61%
Maintain growth	18%

Effective ways of dealing with growth (Q.5)

Light rail	51%
Expanding highways	49%
More parks and open space	45%
Expand wilderness area	36%

that there has been too much growth. This view holds across all congressional districts in Colorado.

Light rail, road expansion and open space favored as ways of addressing growth.

Since the impacts of growth appear to be a priority concern for most Colorado voters, the survey sought to learn Coloradans priorities for addressing these impacts. Respondents were asked to pick two strategies to address growth concerns. Light rail, expansion of state highways and purchasing more parks and open space enjoyed the strongest support.

General, public support of wilderness areas in Colorado cannot be construed as absolute.

While a majority of voters (55%) support an expansion of wilderness holdings in the state, a larger number of those sampled (68%) believes that natural resource development is “very important” to Colorado’s economy. Because federal law makes wilderness designation and the development of natural resources mutually exclusive in any given area, it is misleading to construe that general public support for wilderness translates to political support for all or even any specific wilderness proposal.

In fact, slight changes in the way the “wilderness” question is asked can significantly shift results. In the question referenced above, 55% of the respondents supported wilderness expansion in Colorado while 40% indicated that the amount of wilderness in the state was “about right.” However, when the question is asked in a somewhat different manner the results flip.

Any assertion that the 1997 Talmey-Drake poll indicates strong support for Rep. DeGette’s wilderness proposal is misleading.

Assertions by environmental groups and Rep. DeGette’s staff that the Talmey-Drake survey indicates strong public support for her legislation to designate 1.4 million additional acres of wilderness in Western Colorado are flawed. In fact, a majority of Colorado voters have never even heard of the DeGette proposal.

While the first impression of Colorado voters may be to support the DeGette wilderness bill, additional information about the proposal makes them less supportive ... to the point that more voters end up opposing the measure than supporting it.

Preservation v. Development

Colorado Wilderness (Q.9)

Expand somewhat	39%
Expand greatly	16%
About right	40%
Should reduce	4%

Importance of Resource Development (Q.6)

Very important	68%
Somewhat important	29%
Not very important	3%

Knowledge about DeGette Wilderness Proposal (Q.13)

Heard great deal about it	3%
Heard a little about it	36%
Haven’t heard anything	61%

**Initial support for DeGette
Wilderness Proposal
(Q.14)**

"The wilderness proposal would designate over several dozen tracts of public land ranging from the Northwest corner of the state ... south to near the New Mexico border as wilderness areas. That would be about 1.4 million acres. On the basis of what you know and have heard, would you support or oppose this wilderness designation?"

Support	48%
Oppose	38%
Don't know	14%

**Support for DeGette Proposal After
More information Provided
(Q.20)**

"Now, based on everything that you know or have heard about the wilderness proposal, do you generally support or oppose it?"

Support	39%
Oppose	49%
Don't know	13%

**Additional Information Erodes Support
for DeGette Wilderness Proposal**

	more supportive	less supportive
Input was not broadly sought from all local governments and businesses that will be affected. (Q.15)	22%	69%
Wilderness bill was introduced without consulting with Colorado's two U.S. Senators or Congressman Scott McInnis. (Q.16)	18%	68%
Wilderness designation will prevent all development within its boundaries. (Q.17)	38%	52%
Wilderness designation would put the land in federal control and could give federal officials much more control over Western Colorado's water. (Q.18)	16%	74%

In the final analysis, the execution of public policy is about priorities, tough choices and the allocation of scarce resources.

While Coloradans clearly hold positive attitudes about wilderness areas, if given the choice between the DeGette wilderness proposal and an expansion of parks and open space in communities throughout the state, they would choose parks.

**Voters' Choice Between DeGette
Wilderness Proposal and More Parks
and Open Space
(Q.19)**

Wilderness proposal	22%
Parks and open space	68%

Guide to the Nomenclature of Public Lands

This poll and others suggest that the average citizen does not make the fine distinctions made in public policy about the status of public lands. To the average American, a “wilderness area” is a great place to take an RV, park it next to permanent barbecue and restroom facilities, and use it as a basecamp for spending 2-5 days trekking in the wilderness – not realizing that a federally-designated wilderness area does not permit mechanized vehicles, permanent facilities, and many of the amenities taken for granted by the common “trekkers.” Indeed, the management of public lands is a world of its own, complete with a hard-to-penetrate jargon, including many different kinds of federal public land designations where restrictions on use vary tremendously. Commonly used terms from the nomenclature of public lands are:

Acquired Lands: Lands in Federal ownership that were obtained by the Government through purchase, condemnation, or gift, or by exchange. See also Public Domain Lands, Public Lands, Reserved Lands, Vacant Public Land.

Federal Land: All classes of land owned by the Federal Government.

FLPMA: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (Public Law 94-579, 90 Stat. 2743), commonly called the “Organic Act” for the Bureau of Land Management.

Multiple Use: A system under which the same area of land is used simultaneously for two or more purposes, often by two or more different persons or groups. These uses might be complementary (e.g., trekking and camping) or competitive (e.g., snowmobiling and cross country skiing) with one another. This long-term BLM management practice was codified in 1976 with the enactment of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Multiple use involves managing an area for various benefits, recognizing that the establishment of land use priorities and exclusive uses in certain areas are necessary to ensure that multiple uses can occur harmoniously across a landscape.

National Battlefield: This general title includes national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park. In 1958, a National Park Service committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such park lands.

National Cemetery: There are presently 14 national cemeteries in the National Park System, all of which are administered in conjunction with an associated unit and are not accounted for separately.

National Forest: Federal lands that have been designated by Executive Order or Statute as National Forests, or purchased units and other land under the administration of the USDA Forest Service.

National Lakeshore: National lakeshores, all on the Great Lakes, closely parallel the seashores in character and use.

National Memorial: A national memorial is commemorative of a historic person or episode; it need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject.

National Monument: The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President to declare by public proclamation landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest situated on lands owned or controlled by the government to be national monuments.

National Park: These are generally large natural places having a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining and consumptive activities are not authorized.

National Parkway: The title parkway refers to a roadway and the parkland paralleling the roadway. All were intended for scenic motoring along a protected corridor and often connect cultural sites.

National Preserve: National preserves are areas having characteristics associated with national parks, but in which Congress has permitted continued public hunting, trapping, oil/gas exploration and extraction. Many existing national preserves, without sport hunting, would qualify for national park designation.

National Recreation Area (NRA): Twelve NRAs in the system are centered on large reservoirs and emphasize water-based recreation. Five other NRAs are located near major population centers. Such urban parks combine scarce open spaces with the preservation of significant historic resources and important natural areas in locations that provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people.

National River: There are several variations to this category: national river and recreation area, national

scenic river, wild river, etc. The first was authorized in 1964 and others were established following passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

National Trail: National scenic trails and national historic trails are the titles given to these linear parklands (over 3,600 miles) authorized under the National Trails System Act of 1968.

Outstanding Natural Area (ONA): These are established to preserve scenic values and areas of natural wonder. The preservation of these resources in their natural condition is the primary management objective. Access roads, parking areas, and public use facilities are normally located on the periphery of the area. The public is encouraged to walk into the area for recreation purposes whenever feasible.

Public Domain Lands: Original public domain lands that have never left Federal ownership; also, lands in Federal ownership that were obtained by the Government in exchange for public domain lands or for timber on public domain lands. One category of Public Lands.

Public Lands: Any land and interest in land owned by the United States that are administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except for (1) lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf, and (2) lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos. Includes Public Domain and Acquired Lands.

Recreation and Public Purposes Act: Act of June 14, 1926 (44 Stat. 741), as amended, that provides for the purchase or lease of public lands by (a) Federal, State, or local governmental units for any activity that serves the interest of the general public consistent with public policy or (b) nonprofit organizations if the lands are to be used for recreation purposes in an established or proposed recreation project area.

Research Natural Area (RNA): A natural area established and maintained for research and education. The public may be excluded or restricted from such areas to protect studies.

Reserved Lands: Federal lands that are dedicated or set aside for a specific public purpose or program and that are, therefore, generally not subject to disposition under the operation of all of the public land laws.

Vacant Public Land: Public land that is not reserved, appropriated, or set aside for a specific or designated purpose. Such land is not covered by any non-Federal right or claim other than permits, leases, rights-of-way, and unreported mining claims.

Wetlands: Permanently wet or intermittently flooded areas where water table (fresh, saline, or brackish) is at, near, or above the soil surface for extended intervals, where hydric wet soil conditions are normally exhibited, and where water depths generally do not exceed about 6 1/2 feet. Marshes, shallows, swamps, muskegs, lake bogs and wet meadows are examples of wetlands.

Wilderness: An area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvement or human habitation. In plain English this means, under wilderness designation, federal property cannot be used for mining, grazing, logging or oil drilling. It also prohibits vehicles, including automobiles, snowmobiles, mountain bikes and dirt bikes. In addition, certain activities such as rock climbing, are prohibited and hunting and fishing can be restricted by the states. All these restrictions are obtained because a wilderness is protected and managed to preserve its natural conditions, meaning the land (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wildlife Refuge: Haven or sanctuary for animals in an area of land or land and water set aside and maintained for their preservation and protection. Today the U.S. Wildlife Refuge System comprises 503 areas nationwide to protect big game (e.g., bison, bighorn sheep, and elk); small game; waterfowl; and colonial nongame birds such as pelicans, terns, and gulls.

Woodlands: Forest lands usually supporting open-grown, widely scattered trees of marginal merchantability and generally more valuable for watershed or wildlife protection purposes than for the production of timber for commercial purposes.

Additional Resources

Print Resources:

- Anderson, Terry L. (ed.). *Multiple Conflicts Over Multiple Uses*, (Bozeman, MT: Political Economy Research Center, 1994).
- Anderson, Terry L. and Donald R. Leal. *Free Market Environmentalism*, (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1991).
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- Nelson, Robert H. *Public Lands and Private Rights: The Failure of Scientific Management*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).
- Nelson, Robert H. *Reaching for Heaven on Earth: The Theological Meaning of Economics*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991).
- Nelson, Robert H. and Mary M. Chapman. "Voices From The Heartland: New Tools for Decentralizing Management of the West's Public Lands," *Points West Special Report*, (Denver: Center for the New West, December 1995).
- Postrel, Virginia. *The Future and Its Enemies*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1998).
- Simon, Julian L. *The Ultimate Resource II*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
- Tilton, Buck. *America's Wilderness*, (Santa Rosa, CA: Foghorn Press, 1996).
- Tisdale, Mary E. and Bibi Booth (eds.). *Beyond the National Parks: A Recreation Guide to Public Lands in the West*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, May 1998).

Web Resources:

Advocacy Groups, Think Tanks & Research Organizations:

CATO	http://www.cato.org
Center for the New West	http://www.newwest.org
Colorado Wilderness Network	http://www.cowildernessnetwork.org
Competitive Enterprise Institute	http://www.cei.org
The National Center For Public Policy Research	http://www.nationalcenter.org
National Wilderness Institute	http://www.nwi.org
Natural Resources Conservation Service	http://www.nrcs.usda.gov
Political Economy Research Center	http://www.perc.org
The Wilderness Society	http://www.wilderness.org

Media & Government:

Colorado Central Magazine	http://www.cozine.com
Headwaters News	http://www.headwatersnews.org
High Country News	http://www.hcn.org/index.html
The National Park Service	http://www.nps.gov
U.S.D.A. Forest Service	http://www.fs.fed.us
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	http://www.blm.gov
U.S. House of Representatives Resources Committee	http://www.house.gov/resources
U.S. Representative Diana DeGette	http://www.house.gov/degette
U.S. Representative Scott McInnis	http://www.house.gov/mcinnis
U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell	http://www.senate.gov/~campbell

Wilderness Poll

The Center's project consisted of a telephone survey of 511 Colorado voters, randomly selected from a list of registered voters, conducted between July 8-10, 1999. The research was designed and developed by the Center for the New West in cooperation with Strategies West, a Colorado-based public opinion research organization, which also conducted the field work. The interviews lasted approximately twelve minutes. The margin of error for the survey is 4.5% at a 95% confidence level.

Hello ... my name is _____. I'm calling from Strategies West research ... a national public opinion research firm. We're conducting a brief survey in your area ... and I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions.

1. First ... do you or does anyone in your family work for the media ... or for the federal government? [if "YES" ... which agency?]

____-1 No

____-2 Yes

____-3 Don't Know/Refused

1. Let me ask you about living in Colorado. What would you consider the best thing about living in Colorado? _____.

2. And what is the worst thing about living in Colorado? _____.

3. Some people say that we've had too much growth in Colorado, that we need to protect our quality of life by limiting development. Others say that we need to maintain the state's vibrant growth in order to ensure that our economy remains strong. Which point of view comes closest to your opinion?

61.4 Too much growth

17.6 Maintain growth

18.0 Neither

2.9 Don't Know/No Answer

4. I'm now going to read you several ideas that have been offered about how to deal with growth in Colorado. Please tell me which two of these strategies do you believe would be the most effective in addressing growth?

48.5 Expanding the state's highway system to ease traffic congestion.

45.4 Purchasing more parks and open space in and around urban areas.

51.1 Building light rail systems to get more people out of their cars.

35.6 Expanding federal wilderness areas in Colorado to preserve special areas.

4.5 Don't Know/No Answer

5. How important do you think mining, agriculture, ranching and other natural resource development is to Colorado's economy?

67.5 Very important
29.4 Somewhat important
3.1 Not very important at all

6. Colorado is known for its wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities. I'd like to read you a list of things people do in Colorado ... and in each case, please estimate for me how many times in the last year - that is the last 12 months - have you or your family done any of the following:

21.88 Visited a local park ... somewhere in the state or region where you live.
62.36 Went walking or sight-seeing ... within an hour of your home.
5.20 Used a recreational vehicle (RV) in the mountains.
6.78 Hunted or fished in Colorado.
2.88 Went downhill skiing in Colorado.
4.05 Went hiking or camping in a designated wilderness area.
2.29 Boating ... rafting or canoeing on a lake or river in Colorado.
2.02 Rode a snowmobile or off-road motorcycle.
.70 Went cross-country skiing.

7. Now, I'm going to go back and read you a list of those outdoor resources and in each case, please tell me whether you believe there is too much of the resource available in Colorado ... not enough or just about the right amount. For example: Open space and parks ... do you believe there is too much ... or ... not enough open space and parks in Colorado ... or do you believe there is just about the right amount?

	Too much	Not enough	Just right	DK/NA
A. Open space/parks	2.5	47.9	45.0	4.5
B. Places to walk / sightsee within 1 hour of home	.8	25.8	70.8	2.5
C. Places to drive and camp with RV	7.4	22.9	52.1	17.6
D. Places to hunt/fish	2.5	19.8	63.6	14.1
E. Places for downhill skiing.	15.7	5.3	60.5	18.6
F. Wilderness areas	3.1	38.4	51.1	7.4
G. Places to boat and raft	3.1	20.0	63.2	13.7
H. Places to ride snowmobiles and off-road motorcycles	18.0	10.0	42.7	29.4

9. Thinking about federally designated wilderness areas in Colorado - do you think we should:

40.3 The amount of wilderness we have in Colorado is about right ... we should keep the way they are now.
4.1 We should reduce the amount of wilderness areas in Colorado.
39.3 We should expand wilderness areas in the state somewhat.
16.2 We should greatly expand wilderness areas in Colorado.

10. Could you please tell me if the **Rocky Mountain National Park** is a wilderness area?

46.8 Yes
29.2 No
24.1 Don't Know/No Answer

11. Now I would like to read you a list of activities which often take place in Colorado ... please tell me in each case, if it is **true** or **false** that such an activity is allowed to take place in a federally designated wilderness area.

	True	False	DK/NA
A. Hiking	93.0	2.7	4.3
B. Fishing	86.5	7.0	6.5
C. Coal mining	15.7	68.1	16.2
D. Snowmobiling	42.1	44.2	13.7
E. Camping	84.7	8.0	7.2
F. Energy production from wind or hydro facilities	31.1	45.4	23.5
G. Cellular phone tower	22.5	51.1	26.4
H. Drilling of oil wells	13.9	69.7	16.4
I. Weather station	65.4	12.9	21.7

12. People in Colorado have some different opinions about creating additional federal wilderness areas in the state. I would like to read you two statements and ask you to tell me, in general, which one comes the closest to your views.

Statement A: Some people strongly support creating additional wilderness areas in Colorado because federal wilderness designation will prevent virtually any development or major activities from occurring in these areas ... thus, allowing major tracts of land to be forever preserved from human interference.

Statement B: Other people think we should be more cautious about designating more wilderness areas because a vast amount of land is already locked up as wilderness in Colorado ... and there are other - more flexible - land classifications which will protect the land but also allow some controlled level of multiple use.

47.7 Strongly support more wilderness.
50.7 Be more cautious.
1.6 Don't Know/No Answer

13. Recently, Diana DeGette - the Congresswoman from Denver proposed legislation that would designate new wilderness areas in Western Colorado. How much have you heard about Congresswoman DeGette's proposal?

3.3 Heard a great deal about the proposal.
35.6 Heard a little bit about it.
61.1 Haven't heard anything about it.

14. The wilderness proposal would designate over several dozen tracts of public land ranging from the Northwest corner of the state ... south to near the New Mexico border as wilderness areas. That would be about 1.4 million acres. On the basis of what you know and have heard, would you support or oppose this wilderness designation?

48.3 Support
38.2 Oppose
13.5 Don't Know/No Answer

Let me give you a little more information about the wilderness proposal ... and in each case, please tell me if it would make you more supportive or less supportive of the wilderness plans.

15. In putting together her proposal, Ms. DeGette met with environmental groups and wilderness supporters and did not seek the broad input from local government and business leaders ... from the areas that will be impacted by wilderness designation. Does this make you more supportive or less supportive of her proposal?

22.3 More supportive
68.5 Less supportive
9.2 Don't Know/No Answer

16. This wilderness proposal was also introduced without first consulting with Colorado's two U.S. Senators and Congressman Scott McInnis - who represents Western Colorado where the proposed wilderness area is located. Does this make you more supportive or less supportive of her proposal?

17.6 More supportive
67.9 Less supportive
14.5 Don't Know/No Answer

17. The wilderness proposal will stop or prevent all development within those several dozen separate tracts ... that would include mineral development ... roads ... any structures ... utility lines ... cellular phone structures ... etc. Does this make you more supportive or less supportive of her proposal?

38.2 More supportive
51.5 Less supportive
10.4 Don't Know/No Answer

18. The wilderness designation would put all control of the land involved in the hands of the federal government ... and could give federal officials much more control of Western Colorado's water. Does this make you more supportive or less supportive of her proposal?

16.4 More supportive
74.4 Less supportive
9.2 Don't Know/No Answer

19. If you could choose between the designation of 1.4 million more acres of federal wilderness area in Western Colorado ... or a major expansion of parks and open space in our communities throughout the state ... which would you prefer?

21.7 Wilderness proposal
67.9 More parks and open space
10.4 Don't Know/No Answer

20. Now, based on everything that you know or have heard about the wilderness proposal ... do you generally support or oppose it?

38.7	Support
48.7	Oppose
12.5	Don't Know/No Answer

Now I only have a couple of more questions for statistical purposes only....

21. First ... can you tell me what age group you're in ... just tell me when to stop

18-25	2.0
26-35	7.2
36-45	20.5
46-55	23.1
56-65	16.0
65+	30.9
Refused/Don't Know	

22. And finally, do you consider yourself to be more of a Democrat ... a Republican ... or an Independent?

Democrat	26.0
Republican	34.6
Independent	35.8
Refused/Don't Know	

23. How long have you lived in Colorado?

Less than a year	
1 year	.8
2 years	1.8
3 years	3.7
4 years	2.2
5 + years	91.6

24. What is your total combined household income?

		Distribution without "Refused"
Less than \$25,000	16.2	19.5
\$25,000-\$40,000	20.7	24.9
\$40,000-\$55,000	12.1	14.6
\$55,000-\$70,000	13.9	16.8
\$70,000-\$90,000	8.2	9.9
over \$90,000	11.9	14.3
Refused	16.8	



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Center for the New West

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The mission of the Center for the New West is to foster balanced growth and economic development in the Western U.S. and to advance the principles of the Founders, including personal freedom, limited government and free enterprise, in America's New Economy.

Founded in 1989, the Center seeks to improve awareness of the West and Western issues and to provide a platform for leaders – including leaders of business, government, education and civic institutions – to address regional, national and global issues.

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El Pomar Leadership Forums. A venue for civic leaders of business, government and education to address current issues of common concern. Recent Center Forums addressed sprawl, growth management, demographic change, telecommunications policy and rural health care.

The Economic Roundtables. The annual *Western Economic Roundtable* and the *Great Plains Economic Roundtable* are the only forums where top economists share regional forecasts with leaders of business and government and the media.

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